DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 259 495 EC 180 231

AUTHOR Henkel-Ungericht, Renate
TITLE Observation and Analysis of Teaching Behaviour in Schools for Physically Handicapped Children: A Research and Development Project.
PUB DATE Mar 85
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at the Annual International Seminar for Teacher Education (5th, Aveiro, Portugal, March, 1985).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; *Physical Disabilities; Special Education Teachers; *Teacher Education; *Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS *West Germany

ABSTRACT

The paper examines problems in special education teacher preparation in the Federal Republic of Germany and presents the author's own experiences as a teacher of physically handicapped students. The development of an interactional teaching style which minimizes verbal communication, capitalizes on everyday learning, and encourages pupils to use their own initiative is described, as is an investigation into the use and effectiveness of this "adequate action" teaching approach in the classroom. Analysis of the data thus far has resulted in the subdividing of "adequate action" teaching behavior into nine categories, including waiting and watching, organizing or changing the teaching situation to facilitate or demand action, concretely demonstrating actions or clear parts of actions, and taking over elements of an action-sequence that is too complex for the child. (CL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED259495

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

OBSERVATION AND ANALYSIS OF TEACHING BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOLS FOR PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN
A RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

By Renate Henkel-Ungericht
Dipl.Paed., Special Teacher

Center of New Learning Methods
Institute of Education II
University of Tuebingen

Muenzgasse 11
7400 Tuebingen

Paper presented to the
5th Annual International Seminar
for Teacher Education, March 1985
University of Aveiro, Portugal

Special Education for physically handicapped children as well as the adequate Special Teacher Education have been institutionalized (in my part of the Federal Republic of Germany) for fifteen years. Despite the lack of basic educational concepts in this area the research is still insufficient.
The investigation described in this article is an attempt first to relate positive teaching experience to theoretical approaches and then to deduce a feasible conceptional proposal.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Renate Henkel-Ungericht

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

OBSERVATION AND ANALYSIS OF TEACHING BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOLS FOR PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

- A Research and Development Project -

Thoughts on the School for Physically Handicapped

In Baden-Wuerttemberg (a State in the Federal Republic of Germany) the legitimate claim was made in the early seventies that the general educational goals should also be valid for handicapped children. This claim gave rise to the necessity of special schools for physically handicapped children. The newly founded schools aimed for the same target as the general schools: Within the framework of general educational and cultural tasks the main goal of the work in the Schools for Physically Handicapped is to prepare the pupils for a participation in the life of our society.

As a result of their motor impairment there are various effects on the psychomotor, emotional, social-communicative and cognitive development of the affected children. Thus the different prerequisites as well as the individual deficits and requirements become obvious at the time when the handicapped child starts school. The familiar educational steps seemed to be unsuitable to do justice to these special needs. So the founders of the Schools for Physically Handicapped had to look for different paths. Educational and didactic concepts and objectives attached to them had been developed as well. Teachers had to be instructed adequately; they had to become acquainted with the new conceptual ideas.

In the mean time, Schools for Physically Handicapped exist and Special Teacher Education is practised. There now exist official recommendations for teaching and educational aims founded on the following ideas:
The pupils shall learn
-"... to discern their own possibilities of action, to extend

and to organize them as well as to accept the limitations of their own actions.
- to discover their own possibilities for autonomous actions in the community despite the dependence caused by the handicap..."(Empfehlungen fuer den Unterricht in der Schule fuer Koerperbehinderte (Sonderschule), 1984)[1].

These official guidelines name educational aims and the domains in which pupils should be promoted, but it is actually not said how Special Teachers could realize it.

In addition, a plan for Special Teacher Education exists (Kultus und Unterricht 19, 1981). The basic task of the Special Teacher is to provide special situations and conditions facilitating the development of individual potentialities for each pupil and to reduce his/her disadvantages.

In brief summarizing Teacher Training for Special Education involves:
- a great deal of knowledge about the genesis and types of physical disabilities and their consequences in the psychomotor, emotional, social-communicative and cognitive development ;
- a great deal of knowledge about developmental and cognitive psychology, psychology of learning, psychology of personality, psycho-diagnostic methods;
- a great deal of knowledge about pedagogical and didactic theories;
- a comparatively short practical experience in teaching.

The didactic conceptions we have to hand concerning the education of physically handicapped children give priority to the same domains which should be encouraged (HAUPT/JANSEN 1983; SCHOENBERGER 1983). But when it comes to the how the wording remains general and abstract like the official guidelines.

---

[1] "... eigene Handlungsmöglichkeiten zu erkennen, zu erweitern und zu gestalten sowie Grenzen des eigenen Handelns anzuerkennen;
trotz behinderungsbedingter Abhängigkeit zu eigenständigem Handeln in der Gemeinschaft zu finden ..."

Reflections on the Present Situation of the Special Teacher Education

There seem to be several reasons that prevent the physically handicapped from initiating opportunities for an achieving general social gains. Presumably, the cause lies within the developmental process mentioned above of this type of school. In fact, a ghetto-situation was produced and still exists when the new institutions were built. In addition, there is still a discrepancy between the Special Teacher Education and the practice of everyday-teaching. In my view, this discrepancy arises out of the fact that nobody controls whether and how the content of Special Teacher Education is compatible with the demands of the teaching-reality in the School for Physically Handicapped. After it is proved in what the two do not correspond, it will be possible to determine which domains will have to be included in the curriculum of Special Teacher Education.

A logical effect of the -in my opinion- incomplete Special Teacher Education is that many Special Teachers are hardly able to cope with the variety of daily demands. A school -reality arises which often is characterized by

- an extremely complex teaching situation caused by the individual problems of each pupil
- a beginning teacher who is not sufficiently prepared to face this situation immediately and adequately.

Nevertheless, the beginning teacher has to do his/her duty; he/she must teach the present group of pupils independently of his/her feeling of being overtaxed.

As a result of this the same phenomenon can be noticed with almost all beginning teachers: They clearly show a lack of experience in preparing satisfactory teaching situations which

- meet the needs
- allow participation
- promote the learning and development

of each pupil. What often happens in these lessons I experienced myself when I was a beginning teacher and could observe

while educating beginning teachers: Teachers who lack adequate teaching behaviour and practical experience all seem to do the same things: they revert automatically to teaching behaviours they became acquainted with during their own scholastic socialization (HENKEL-UNGERICHT 1984). Reverting to accumulated traditional teaching behaviour must fail because it is oriented towards nonhandicapped pupils. For them traditional teaching, which is mainly teacher-centered and based on the theoretical conveyance of knowledge is unsuitable. Procedure, contents and aims of this traditional teaching are mostly meaningless for this target group.

The problem then is a double one, because, first, the Special Teacher Education does not fit with the actual requirements in school; secondly, reverting to behaviour one has experienced as a pupil oneself as a temporary solution is missing the target. So unintentionally many Special Teachers produce unsatisfactory learning situations instead of providing some which are adapted to the abilities and needs of the handicapped children.

In doing this Special Teachers often do not work towards the main goal of the School for Physically Handicapped (compare p.1) but are counteracting it. It certainly cannot be the purpose of teaching or the function of teachers to oppose accepted positive goals. To improve this unfortunate and irresponsible situation as soon as possible the problem which obviously has to be solved is to gear the Special Teacher Education to the most desirable aims for the pupils. For that purpose the following educational aims which for a long time had been considered as fixed will finally have to be operationalized:

1. The abilities the pupils have to acquire in order to approach the established aims have to be found and defined precisely.
2. The teaching skills a Special Teacher should have at his/her disposal to promote the abilities leading the pupils to the global aims will have to be constructed.

If these (pre)conditions are fulfilled I think the content of initial Special Teacher Education could be extended and made more concrete. Thus, the future Special Teacher would be usefully prepared to meet the handicapped pupils' special needs.

Reality of Teaching

The field of my own practical teaching-experience was the work with physically handicapped children beginning school. In the School for Physically Handicapped beginners enjoy a special treatment which over the years has turned out to be the most suitable for them. The various physical impairments of these children produce two phenomena, one following from the other:

- different courses of personal development in all domains (compare p.1)
- different prerequisites concerning learning-capability.

These facts make it impossible to deal with subjects that are typical in beginning classes of ordinary schools. The prerequisites which are necessary with regard to these subjects have to be first created. From the latter derives the defined task for the beginning stages in the School for Physically Handicapped which is a multiple one:

1. to ascertain the specific initial (pre)conditions of each child
2. to search for contents and provide situations which allow the child to broaden his/her individual prerequisites.

   I.e. the individual developmental level and possibilities will be registered over a long period (compare JETTER/SCHMIDT/SCHOENBERGER 1983). This shows a broad spectrum of the child's situation. Only when this is done it becomes meaningful to prepare the child's integration into the educational process according to his/her own potentialities (compare REISINGER 1983).
3. The educational process should be organized according to the premise of the socalled "Action-Oriented Special Pedagogy". The latter is rooted in Piaget's ideas about the development of thinking, of action and human learning.

These three spheres constitute the teaching in the beginning stages of the School for Physically Handicapped. But only the findings of the pupils' individual learning conditions are basically described. Neither the precise development of the aims of learning nor the method are given. Thus each teacher is left to his/her own resources to construct a relation between the aims of learning, the methods and the global educational aims and the practical realization of them. The latter fact is not in every case to the pupils' advantages.

Background of Experience

Up to now the problem area has been shown from different perspectives in which a Special Teacher is placed

- from Special Teacher Education
- from the teaching-reality in the School for Physically Handicapped.

Within this context my own approach at handling these problems will be seen. The above mentioned proceedings have been acquire from practical doing: I found certain lessons were most attractive for my groups of pupils. These lessons included

1. neglecting verbal communication
2. using 'everyday learning'[1]
3. stimulating the pupils to use their initiative.

In the following the aspect of interactional teaching behaviour is singled out: According to Piaget action is to be interpreted as a representative form of thinking on one hand, and as a frame of learning which encourages thinking on the other. From that the proceeding to initiate competence of action through action seemed to suggest itself in influencing the pupils' operational behaviour and mental structures.

As described above, the actual impairment of the pupils'abilities were first diagnosed. Then with the determination of

---

1 'Everyday learning' describes a procedure which puts emphasis on actions that are planned and introduced to the children with objects deriving from their environment and within adequate real activities (HENKEL-UNGERICHT 1984).

each pupil's deficits through these diagnostic steps the most important aims of learning became apparent. With regard to the position of problems of all group members and to the educational aims everyday situations were provided in which the actual aims seemed to be attainable. These situations were based on the ideas that

- real objects by themselves have a stimulating character;
- real objects taken out of the pupils' environment should be especially attractive;
- real objects are meaningful and important for social reasons;
- the pupils have to catch up with a lot of experience with real objects.

Lessons organized this way turned out to be interesting and motivating for the pupils. They were sure of the teacher's help, if necessary. The requirement inherent in these situations corresponded to the pupils' capabilities. Yet they often still persisted in waiting for the teacher's instructions which they followed well, then waiting once more for instruction. But soon it became apparent that the less the teacher spoke, or instructed verbally, the more the pupils started to initiate actions by themselves. This observation gave rise to the supposition that the imbalance between the teacher's initiation and the pupils' chance to react was caused by the teacher's interactional behaviour. Several reasons seemed to support this

1. on the pupil's side:

The fact that the motor impairment with all its consequences and inadequately organized familiar socialization most often causes the child to be less independent and initiative than a non-handicapped pupil. He/she gets used to the repeated experience: There is always somebody who decides what is to be done and who tells the child how he/she has to do it or -even worse- somebody who does what is to be done. Thus the child learns that there is no necessity for being initiative oneself. It is extremely seldom that this child has the chance to feel the satisfaction arising out of the realization of a task one has chosen by oneself. This development leads to the assumption

that the child is not able to perceive the stimulating character of objects.

2. on the teacher's side:

First of all the teacher's behaviour reinforces the child's past experience that there is always somebody who says what should be done. In addition, the stimulating character of an object or a situation is hindered because the verbal intervention of the teacher covers this impulse and cuts back the time of its effect as well.

Acting like this the teacher is not only restricting the child to a normative use of objects or situations but he/she is preventing

- the child's learning to perceive the stimulating impulse of objects or situations
- to react to such an inherent impulse
- the child's exploring quality and possibilities of the function of an object
- the child's trying and testing out the use of an object
- the child's training and transferring of the use of an object

etc..

All these factors together cause the basic motivational effect of objects and/or situations to be almost lost and the child is left unable to develop initiative and self-directiveness.

When realizing these serious negative influences I started to adapt my own behaviour to the requirements of the teaching-situation and reduced the verbal behaviour. This change was synonymous with an increase in scope for the pupils which led the pupils to develop the ability to see the stimulating character of objects and situations. Increasingly, they showed readiness to get involved in the teaching situation. Finally, all pupils seemed to totally accept the non-verbal manner of communication. This kind of teaching behaviour, that roughly can be circumscribed as an action without speech, was provisionally called "adequate action".

Outlines of the Investigation

It has to be said in advance, that the interactional teaching behaviour called "adequate action" is nothing but a pragmatic product of my own teaching experience. Therefore it is only possible to give a rough description of what constitutes "adequate action" which produces a superficial delimitation not a precise definition.

"Adequate action" describes a teaching behaviour that is comprehensible by a recipient although it is not accompanied by verbal teaching behaviour. Verbal signals are replaced by actional ones which are working and meaningfully characterized in the same way.

The teaching behaviour "adequate action" influences a teaching situation

- directly
- immediately
- through action.

The observer of this teaching behaviour can clearly recognize two facts: The producing of the communicative event and, nearly in the same moment, how the event affects the situational environment of the producer. In order to record the peculiarity of "adequate action" it is necessary to reconsider the teacher and the entire teaching situation.

Up to now a division of the total group of "adequate action" into two subgroups has emerged:

1. In the first subgroup "adequate action" has a direct effect on the addressee by touching and moving, as manipulation in the truest sense of the word. Through performing an action with the addressee, he/she is changed into the object of the action.
2. In the second subgroup "adequate action" is not immediately directed to the addressee, but is diverted with the help of one or more vehicles.

Following the present information the first subgroup forms an area of transition to the large group of non-verbal expressive behaviour. The latter, for instance, includes "Touching

Behaviour" (KNAPP 1978) or "Bodily Contact" (ARGYLE 1979). Currently, it is uncertain how a precise delimitation of the problems of definition can be achieved.

In contrast to the first subgroup the second one clearly seems to fall out of the defined sphere of non-verbal communication. The "adequate action" of this subgroup can presumably compete in its variety, applicability and breadth of effect with verbal or non-verbal teaching behaviour. Just like the latter, "adequate action" can adopt the character of reactive or initiative behaviour as Flanders has described it for verbal teaching behaviour.

By being able to function without a consciously used specific accompaniment of one of the other channels of communication, it might be permissible to call it an autonomous "operational" channel of communication.

For a sensible applicability of "adequate action" a process of learning is a necessary precondition. In the group where "adequate action" is to be used the habitual fixation on verbal behaviour as a means of interaction must be changed by the experience that "adequate action" can be equivalently substituted for verbal communication.

From the above there follows that learning in the described sense can be guaranteed when teaching situations are provided in accordance with the needs of the child. Looked at from the pupils' view-point the teacher is, so to speak, in understatement a kind of element of the teaching situation. Derived from this, it is consistent that the behaviour of this "element" teacher has to be in tune with the pupils' requirements and with the whole teaching situation. So the alternating use of ways of interacional teaching behaviour might be absolutely positive, when learning is mainly focussed, for instance, on the flexible perception and use of interactional events. But when it is a matter of the specific content and aims in this sector of Schools for Physically Handicapped, confusion might arise, or learning might possibly be inhibited. In the following

some typical problems are shown to support these assumptions.

As the matter is to gain competence of action (compare p.6) it is to be assumed that the use of "adequate action" teaching behaviour helps to reduce the often extremely severe problem of transference of these pupils (GAGE/BERLINER 1975; SCHOENBERGER 1982). Thus the pupils are at least partially relieved of transferring verbal information of the teacher into the field of action [1].

It may also be supposed that because of the often appearing problem of "centering"[2] a child is only able to take account of one channel or parts of different channnels when there are several communicative channels presented at the same time. Besides this assumption is based on the theories about presentation, perception and the use of information (TRAVERS 1966; ISSING/ROTH 1966). In addition it is to be feared that this phenomenon could be intensified by the fact that brain-damaged children who tend towards "perseveration"[3], get stuck on the perception of one form of presentation. In this case the information given on a second channel is lost for the child.

The factors outlined may separately or even all together restrict a child's ability to learn. If it is possible oppose these factors with the help of the "operation teaching behaviour its use is justified.

---

[1] Involuntarily the image comes to the mind that actually the child is permanently forced to translate a "foreign language" into his/her "native tongue"; this becomes superfluous when the teacher adapts him-/herself to the "native tongue"...unless the matter is "language teaching".

[2] "Centering"i.e. a child in a special stage of cognitive development is not capable of taking account of several characteristics of reality at the same time, or to relate one to the other.

[3] "Perseveration" i.e. a brain-damaged child can have the tendency to get stuck on a started plan or pattern of action and is mostly not capable of breaking this down by him-/herself.

Up to now all expositions lead to the assertion: "Adequate action" is one suitable kind of teaching behaviour which promotes physically handicapped in the beginning stages of the School for Physically Handicapped. Out of that arises the interest to investigate the following questions in the area of these schools:

1. Do Special Teachers use the teaching behaviour I consider to be important?
2. Does the teaching behaviour occur in different manifestations?
3. In which way does the teaching behaviour have an effect on the pupils and their learning behaviour?
4. Is the teaching behaviour teachable and learnable?

Two matters were confirmed by the first observations of lessons in the School for Physically Handicapped:
- Some Special Teachers used different forms of "adequate action", others did not.
- "Adequate action" can be registered only superficially and descriptively by observers who are not trained.
To facilitate the registeration of the occurrence and, if possible, the effect of "adequate action" as well as to open the results for analytic steps, it is indispensible to have an observation- and analyzing-system. With the help of such a system it should be possible to ascertain and analyze the teaching behaviour "adequate action" quantitatively.

As a suitable system could not be found, the attempt was made to develop one: First video-tapes have been produced, in order not to burden the pupils and teachers with too many visits to school on the one hand; on the other hand, to have teaching material at the disposal, which can be reproduced as often as necessary. The recording took place with two cameras in different schools in four beginners' classes. In these classes lessons lasting ninety minutes each were recorded twice. The cameras had been arranged in different perspectives so as to guarantee that all interactional events between the teacher and all pupils could be recorded.

The development of the observational system was started by describing concretely all the kinds of teaching behaviour which are to be recognized as "adequate action" corresponding to its temporary definition. These descriptions are collected in a catalogue. The similar forms of teaching behaviour obtained are arranged in groups, for which clear features of description have to be constructed.

Unfortunately due to organizational problems at the time, the project has not evolved beyond this point in the research yet. Therefore only interim results can be shown.

An analysis of the data-material I have to date, resulted in nine provisional categories for the "operational" teaching behaviour "adequate action":

- The teacher waits and watches the teaching situation;
- The teacher organizes or changes the teaching situation to facilitate action or demand action, e.g. by providing, making accessible or arranging objects;
- The teacher takes up bodily contact with pupils and only by this facilitates a perception, a manipulation and an understanding of the teaching object. I.e. the teaching object can only be dealt with through the pupil-centered action of the teacher;
- The teacher offers special objects or symbols to one pupil or to the group;
- The teacher concretely demonstrates actions or clear parts of them;
- The teacher supports the action of a child after he/she has asked him to do so and by taking over elements of an action belonging to an action-sequence too complex for the child;
- The teacher takes over without being asked by the child elements of an action-sequence that is complex for the child ("co-operative action");
- The teacher takes entire action-sequences from the child ("acting for the child"), or elements of the action, which he/she obviously could do him-/herself;
- The teacher breaks off actions through situational intervention or takes away the objects from the child.

Outlook to Planned Further Investigations

An observer training has to be developed, tested and evaluated. With the analysis of the video-material the expected relations between "adequate action" and a desired initiative pupil behaviour should be shown.
Then the construction of teaching skills for the special institution School for Physically Handicapped is necessary because it is feared that, up to now, the Special Teacher Education does not convey any teaching skills.
Following this courses should be offered in which the future Special Teachers will have the opportunity to perform their own capabilities by training practical teaching skills. By doing this a better preparation for the tasks in the school -reality will be given.

In this paper it was tried to show a proposal for one method to improve real practical components of Special Teacher Education while maintaining its general conception.

Bibliography

ARGYLE, Michael 1979. Koerpersprache und Kommunikation. Paderborn

Beschluesse der Kultusministerkonferenz 1984. Empfehlungen fuer den Unterricht in der Schule fuer Koerperbehinderte (Sonderschule). Neuwied

FLANDERS, Ned 1970. Analyzing Teaching Behaviour. Reading

GAGE, N.L./BERLINER, D.C. 1975. Educational Psychology. Chicago

HAUPT, U./Jansen, G.W. 1983. Modelle der integrativen Erziehung von koerperbehinderten und nichtbehinderten Kindern und Jugendlichen. In: Handbuch der Sonderpaedagogik 8. Paedagogik der Koerperbehinderten. Hrsg. HAUPT/JANSEN: Berlin

HENKEL-UNGERICHT, Renate 1984. "Everyday Learning" in a Class of Physically Handicapped First Graders as an Opportunity for the Teacher to Use his Full Scope. Unpublished paper presented at the ATEE Conference, Linz

ISSING, L./ROTH, H. 1966. Ein- und zweikanalige Informationsdarbietung im Schulfernsehen. In: Programmiertes Lernen und programmierter Unterricht 6. Hrsg. ZIFREUND. Berlin

JANTZEN, Wolfgang 1974. Sozialisation und Behinderung. Giessen

JETTER, K./SCHMIDT, D./SCHOENBERGER, F. 1983. Sonderpaedagogische Foerderdiagnostik. In: Handbuch fuer Sonderpaedagogik 8. Paedagogik

KLEE, Ernst 1980. Behindert. Ueber die Enteignung von Koerper und Bewusstsein. Frankfurt

KNAPP, Mark 1978. Nonverbal Communication in Human Interaction. New York

PIAGET, Jean 1974. Psychologie der Intelligenz. Olten

REISINGER, Lothar 1983. Zum Problem des Anfangsunterrichts in der Schule fuer Koerperbehinderte. In: Handbuch fuer Sonderpaedagogik 8. Paedagogik der Koerperbehinderten. Hrsg. HAUPT /JANSEN. Berlin

SCHOENBERGER, Franz 1982. Kooperative Didaktik. Unterrichtslehre einer handlungsorientierten Sonderpaedagogik. In: Kooperative Didaktik. Hrsg. SCHOENBERGER. Neustadt

SCHOENBERGER, Franz 1983. Neue didaktische Konzeptionen in der Koerperbehindertenpaedagogik. In: Handbuch fuer Sonderpaedagogik 8. Paedagogik der Koerperbehinderten. Hrsg. HAUPT/JANSEN. Berlin

Schulgesetz fuer Baden-Wuerttemberg in der Fassung vom 1.August 1983. In: "Kultus und Unterricht". Amtsblatt des Ministeriums fuer Kultus und Sport Baden-Wuerttemberg, 19. Stuttgart

TRAVERS, Robert 1966. Informationsuebertragung auf Menschen als Empfaenger. In: Programmiertes Lernen und programmierter Unterricht 6. Hrsg. ZIFREUND. Berlin